

Queen Emma's Summer Palace
2913 Pali Highway
Honolulu
Honolulu County
Hawaii

HABS No. HI-17

HABS
HI,
2-HONLU,
24-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

QUEEN EMMA'S SUMMER PALACE

HABS No. HI-17

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ADDRESS: 2913 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Honolulu County, Hawaii

OWNER: State of Hawaii

USE: Museum

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Hanaiakamalama, more commonly known as Queen Emma's Summer Palace, has had a long and interesting history. The house is situated in Nuuanu Valley above the city of Honolulu. In the 1840's the land on which the house now stands was separated from the city by nearly two miles of open land and tropical forest. This land, a portion of a grant known as Kaukahoku, was originally designated as Fort Land; that is, it was set apart for the use of the Fort, probably as agricultural land. Sometime in the 1840's Kekuanaoa, Governor of the island of Oahu, leased this land to Henry A. Peirce, an American merchant who had established a thriving business in the Hawaiian Islands. Peirce, however, soon left the Islands and the land was leased to John G. Lewis. In September 1848 Lewis notified the Hawaiian Government that at the end of the year he desired to buy the Government interest in the land for \$500. The Government, however, set the price at \$800 plus interest, which Lewis presumably paid. Two years later in April 1850 Lewis sold the land to John Young II for \$6000. It may be assumed from the price Young paid that a house was included in the purchase price, for it is unlikely that the land value itself would account for the price increase. Tradition claims that the house on the property was built by Lewis in 1847, but no original plans of construction or building information to substantiate this claim have been discovered. John Lewis was a sailor who had entered the dry goods importing business in Honolulu. Around 1851 he went to Boston and engaged in business there but in a few years he

returned to Hawaii where he lived until his death in 1884.¹

John Young gave the name Hanai-a-kamalama to the house on the Nuuanu property. The name means "foster child of the God Kamalama", one of the ancestral gods of John Young's mother, a Hawaiian high Chiefess, Mary Kuamoo Kaoanahaeha, a niece of King Kamehameha I. Young's father was the famous Englishman John Young I who was befriended by King Kamehameha I in 1790 and became one of his trusted advisors. John Young II was also an uncle to Emma Rooke who became Queen of the Hawaiian Islands at the time of her marriage to King Kamehameha IV in 1856. John Young gave the young royal couple the use of the home in Nuuanu Valley and they found it a pleasant respite from court life at Iolani Palace. At his death in 1857 Young willed the property to his niece, Queen Emma, and thus Hanaiakamalama came into her possession. She and her family continued to enjoy the home for another five years until the death of her young son, and then her husband. Queen Emma continued to use the home as a summer house until her death in 1885.

During these years Hanaiakamalama became a center of social activity as well as a restful country retreat. It is in connection with one such social event that we have our only indication of any structural details of the house prior to 1915. In 1869 the Duke of Edinburgh visited the Hawaiian Islands as part of the itinerary of a round-the-world tour. He was lavishly entertained and it is said that "a room was prepared for Queen Emma for the entertainment of the Duke" at Hanaiakamalama. It is suggested that this was the large room at the rear of the house which is designated today as the Duke of Edinburgh Room. Contemporary accounts of the Duke's visit to Hawaii, however, do not mention that he visited at Queen Emma's home in Nuuanu Valley and references in later accounts speak of a lanai rather than a room at the rear of the house.²

Queen Emma's will designated that after her death the income and rent of Hanaiakamalama should be used for annuities and for scholarships for students at St. Andrew's Priory, an Episcopal girls' school in Honolulu. However, less than a year after her death in 1885, Alexander Cartwright, the executor of her estate, petitioned to sell Hanaiakamalama in order to settle the debts of the estate. In his testimony before the Supreme Court of the Kingdom, Cartwright said that the "land has always been a burden to the estate; all income derived out of it has only been \$100, barely enough to make repairs on the lands; the houses are in sad need of repairs, and unless they were repaired it would be hard to get tenants. It will take at least \$2000 for repairing them. I have even gone so far as to offer the place to people to live there rent free if they would keep it in repair." Cartwright's petition was allowed and newspaper advertisements of the sale describe Hanaiakamalama as "formerly occupied by W.L. Green as a private residence." This is the only indication that anyone lived in the house after Queen Emma's death and there are no inclusive dates available for the period of Mr. Green's residence. As the sale of other estate land brought in sufficient money to pay the debts, the sale of Hanaiakamalama was withdrawn. But in 1890 the application to sell the estate was renewed and Cartwright again testified that Queen Emma's old home was "in need of extensive repairs, is old and untenantable, has been unoccupied for past five years." The land and house were put at auction and were bought by the Hawaiian Government on August 27, 1890 for \$8000.

The Government, finding itself with a house, proceeded in September 1891 to lease it to James G. Spencer for the sum of one dollar. The lease was made with the understanding that Spencer "shall lay on water from the Government main and to expend the sum of not less than \$300 in sundry repairs

on the Dwelling House." As Spencer was secretary of the Pacific Hardware Company, it no doubt seemed reasonable that he could make such repairs as were necessary to salvage the house from disrepair. A year later in August 1892 the Government renewed Spencer's lease for \$50 yearly rental, noting its appreciation for the repairs he had made. No records as to the type or extent of these repairs have been discovered. As the Spencer family apparently occupied the house until 1911, there may have been a number of minor alterations made during these years.⁴

On April 17, 1906 it was announced that the Queen Emma property in Nuuanu Valley would be sold by the Government at public auction on May 12 for an upset price of \$10,000. According to newspaper reports the land had originally been purchased as a site for a water filtration plant, but plans had been altered in the ensuing years and the government wished to dispose of the land. Strong public objections to the sale were made, many suggesting that the land be set aside as a park. After reconsideration, the land was withdrawn from sale and five years later it did, in fact, become a park. On April 6, 1911 by Executive Order No. 4, Governor Walter F. Frear set aside the land surrounding Hanaiakamalama as a park to be maintained by the city of Honolulu. This action was applauded as a first step in establishing a truly Hawaiian park for the enjoyment of visitors to Honolulu. A shelter was needed in the park and as one writer put it, "There are possibilities in the old Queen Emma house. The high ceilings, the pillared porch, the firm foundation, the large rooms, the plastered walls, the windows heavily shuttered, the great lanai at the back, all these could be put to good use for a Hawaiian house in an Hawaiian park."⁵

The Board of Supervisors of the city of Honolulu did not find this suggestion feasible, however, and there were rumors in 1914 that the house would be

torn down. At this point the Daughters of Hawaii, a society dedicated to the preservation of Hawaiian culture, stepped into the picture. Mrs. C.S. Holloway, Regent of the Daughters of Hawaii, had a survey of the house made to estimate the needed repairs and the results of this survey made by Mr. H.F. Bertlemann were submitted to the Mayor of Honolulu, J.C. Lane, in January 1915. (See appendix A). After deliberation the Board of Supervisors approved the plan for renovating Queen Emma's home and converting its appearance to the time of Queen Emma. Maintenance of the home was given to the Daughters of Hawaii on April 27, 1915 by Executive Order No. 13 issued by Territorial Governor Pinkham.⁶

Mr. Bertlemann was contracted to make the repairs to the house and it appears from his letter to the Daughters of Hawaii that these repairs were not as extensive as those he had recommended previously. (See appendix B). When completed the total cost of the repairs was \$2490.

It was the plan of the Daughters of Hawaii to convert Hanaiakamalama to a museum and to furnish it, if possible, with many of the former possessions of Queen Emma and the other Hawaiian royalty. In 1921 it became necessary to provide a caretaker's apartment for the house. This was added to the rear of the building for approximately \$2000.⁷

In recent years the major repairs to Queen Emma's Palace have, most often, been necessitated by termite infestation. In 1925 a part of the ceiling plaster in the house fell, leaving the laths exposed. Upon examination it was found that the whole roof and the ceiling woodwork were badly eaten by termites. The corrugated tin roof on the building covered an old shingle roof which had become a mere shell. Several persons were called in to inspect the need for repairs and Thomas Nott's bid of \$2100 was accepted. This was only the

beginning of problems with the roof at Hanaiakamalama. In 1928 minor repairs were again made, along with some alterations in the caretaker's apartment. In 1931 about \$100 was spent for new roof beams and new corrugated iron, but nine years later more repairs were needed and a composition roof was suggested as more desirable for the damp locality in Nuuanu Valley. In 1949 rather extensive repairs were made to the interior of the house, the floors were refinished, the hardware replaced, the walls touched up and painted, but again a year later the roof was found to be badly in need of repair. The minutes of the Daughters of Hawaii meetings both before and after 1949 make many references to this continuing problem. We find that in November 6, 1950, "no gutters could be put up because the roof was in such very bad condition"; and in February 8, 1957, "moved that a thoroughly complete new roof rather than repairs of existing roofing be made".⁸

In 1954 a meeting house for the Daughters of Hawaii was built on the grounds of Queen Emma's Palace. Shortly afterward the large room at the rear of the house, which had served as their meeting room, was renovated and refurnished at a cost of approximately \$4000. This is the room now designated as the Duke of Edinburgh Room. It appears that the last major repairs at Hanaiakamalama were made in 1959 with a reference on May 28th that "...to avoid vast improvement projects such as the present restoration ...", periodic checks would be made to keep pace with minor repairs.⁹

Queen Emma's Palace is maintained today as a museum by the Daughters of Hawaii and is a stately reminder of Queen Emma and old Hawaii.

Footnotes:

1

Land Grant Book 1, page 197. (Archives of Hawaii; hereafter, AH)

Privy Council, III, 94, September 1, 1948. (AH)
Interior Department Book 3, 136, April 4, 1851. (AH)
The Friend, 1884, November, page 83.

2
Hawaiian Gazette, 1870, March 2, page 3 column 1.

3
Probate of Estate of Queen Emma, 1787:1. (AH)
Probate of Estate of Queen Emma, 1787:2. (AH)

4
Interior Department Book 51, page 184. (AH)
Interior Department, Land Letter Files, page 136. (AH)

5
Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 1906, April 17, page 2, column 2.
" " " , " , May 11, page 4, column 1.
" " " , " , May 12, page 10, column 2.
" " " , " , June 6, page 4 column 1.
" " " , 1913, November 23, page 17.

6
Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 1915, January 18, page 9 column 7.
" " " , " , " 21, " 7 " 6.
" " " , " , " 20, page 4 column 2.

7
Daughters of Hawaii, Minutes of Meeting, February 26, 1914.
Manuscript Letter, D.K. Kamai To J. M. Swanzy, September 21, 1921.

8
Daughters of Hawaii, Minutes of Meeting, July 15, 1925.
" " " , " " " , August 12, 1925.
" " " , " " " , March 6, 1928.
" " " , " " " , January 2, 1931.
" " " , " " " , May 18, 1949.
" " " , " " " , November 6, 1950.
" " " , " " " , February 8, 1957.

9
Daughters of Hawaii, Minutes of Meeting, November 12, 1954.
" " " , " " " , January 27, 1955.
" " " , " " " , February 11, 1955.
" " " , " " " , March 16, 1956.
" " " , " " " , May 28, 1959.

Prepared by:

Karmen N. Tiaht

Karmen Tiaht
Hawaii State Archives

August 1967.

A: H.F. Bertlemann Letter, Minutes of Board of Supervisors, City and County of Honolulu, volume 12, January 4, 1915.

"Build coral steps 8'6" long - 4 steps to front lanai; build 4 coral steps 5'0" long - 3 steps to side of house similar to steps already at rear; patch the whole of the outside walls, base and soffit, etc.; replace all blinds; replace all broken glass in outside doors and windows; repair all outside doors and windows, supply new keys and fasteners where wanting; remove the 2 parts of T&G wall and fill space with clapboard to match present wall; doors to remain; repair all foundation walls and plaster same; remove the whole of the present front veranda floor, sills, joists, etc., and build entirely new veranda including new column and repairing on present column; place new sills between present sills in basement with posts to thoroughly strengthen main floor; build concrete curbing around entrance to basement steps, repair present steps, and place short gutter above, on roof, to shed water away from basement; place new rafters and hangers to strengthen roof, take off all old iron on main building and replace with new, also replace with new iron part of addition building. Use for main building and addition iron ridging instead of wood as at present; remove valley between buildings and replace with new; paint house 2 coats, outside and inside; paint all new woodwork 2 coats and all roofing iron one coat both sides before putting in place."

B: H.F. Bertlemann to Mrs. C.S. Holloway, May 15, 1915. (Files, Daughters of Hawaii)

"I hereby agree to do the following work at the Queen Emma home viz. Thoroughly repair and clean all plaster walls and ceilings then give one coat size and two coats Kalsomine; clean all woodwork both inside and out, and give two coats paint; all floors to be patched and given two coats paint; all broken glass to be replaced; supply all doors with glass door knobs similar to the original ones; ease all doors; supply all catches, bolts, etc., required for the windows, doors, etc.; give roof two coats of paint; fit gutter over front steps; line large room with T&G fitting large ceiling mould - also new base mould; supply flower rail with turned columns to support same for front verandah leaving the home ready for occupancy. The above work done in a workmanlike and satisfactory manner for the sum of \$1678. The kitchen addition to cost with plumbing complete - \$278. The cesspool not to cost above \$100 - maybe less. This makes a total of \$2065 which I trust will prove satisfactory. With regard to the caretaker's cottage I should like to confer with you before giving an estimate."

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

GENERAL STATEMENT

Architectural interest and merit:

This relatively small frame structure is an excellent example of the designer's understanding of climate and purpose. The formal plan arrangement, the wide central hall, the high ceilings, and the floor-length shuttered casement windows all contribute to the comfort of the occupants. And the fact that each room was provided with one or more direct accesses to the lanais (porches) and exterior gardens helps provide for the relaxed atmosphere of a summer vacation residence.

Like so many of the old buildings in Hawaii, the ravages of termites throughout the years made necessary a rather complete restoration, particularly for structural stability. Since the last major restoration, maintenance by the present occupants, the Daughters of Hawaii, has contributed to the relatively sound condition of the existing fabric.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

Excluding the modern care-takers apartment which is an obvious addition on the right rear and is not included in this report, the house measures 50' - 5" across the front and is 73' - 6" in depth, including the lanai (porch) on the front and the room on the rear. It is one-story over a basement. In plan the main house, including the lanai (porch) on the front is a rectangle under one roof. What probably was an earlier lanai on the rear is now a large room, roofed separately.

Foundations:

The rubble lava rock foundation varies in thickness from 1' - 8" to 2' - 4".

It is continuous under the main part of the house, with a smooth stucco plaster surface on the exterior and an irregular plastered face on the interior. The foundations under the rectangular addition on the rear consist of rough stone piers supporting main floor beams. On the perimeter these piers are finished in smooth stucco on the exterior face only. Wood lattice panels are inserted between these external piers.

Wall construction, finish, color:

The exterior walls are white clapboards with approximate $4\frac{1}{2}$ " to the weather.

Structural system, framing:

Inspection of the structural framing discloses a mixture of recent members along with obviously earlier framing, creating a non-uniformity in many areas. The first floor framing, visible in the basement presents two main conditions. In condition one 3" x 4" joists bear directly on top of 6" x 6" beams which extend to but not through the foundation walls. In condition two, 3" x 4" joists, 2' - 4" o.c. are notched into 4" x 9" beams which extend through the foundation wall to support the lanai (porch) in front and the room in the rear. Condition two is more recent. On the ewa (left side) only what appears to be an original 6" x 8" girder supports 4" x 8" and 4" x 9" beams.

In the attic, 2" x 4" and 2" x 6" roof rafters, 2' - 0" on center alternate, hip joists are 2" x 6", and braces are 2" x 4". Ceiling joists to which the single layer of ceiling boards are nailed are 2" x 4" o.c. The newer framing and roof appears to date from the 1959 restoration.

Porches, stoops, bulkheads:

The entrance lanai (porch) consists of 5 bays of fluted Doric hollow wood columns, 13' - 8" high from architrave to the wood floor. The ceiling

consists of wide boards with joints covered with wide, flat battens producing a panelized effect. The main roof of the house incorporates this porch, which is approached by modern concrete walk and steps from the driveway. An early photograph appearing in the magazine Paradise of the Pacific, December 1913, shows that a lattice railing existed then between the columns. There are four sets of coral rock stoops on the sides, the extreme left rear (ewa) set leading to a blind wall in which there is evidence of a former door. On the right side (Waikiki) is a small modern wood porch addition.

Although now enclosed, the existing Duke of Edinburgh room on the rear may have been a porch on the rear. Although the Hawaiian Gazette, March 2, 1870 states in part "...until evening when the fine room prepared for her Majesty (Queen Emma) for the entertainment of the Duke of Edinburgh was thrown open...", there is some reason to believe that at one time this was a former lanai (porch). The Pacific Commercial Advertiser, November 23, 1913 states "...Throw open its great shutters, make use of lanai and porch and spacious entry rooms..." and "...the plastered walls, the windows heavily shuttered, the great lanai at the back..." Physical evidence today substantiates that at some time in its history, this room was an open lanai. Strongest evidence is the door trim at the existing cased opening in the room which is identical to the exterior trim of all windows and doors. In other words, this opening was probably at one time an exterior doorway on the axis of the main entrance door. Also of interest is the fact, that under the existing separate gabled roof over this room, there is an undisturbed flat roof which still retains a covering of flat metal plates with the joints sealed with a reddish type of solder or red lead. In the Minutes of the organization, January 2, 1931, we find "...which

would include repairing the iron roof by lapping the pieces of iron closer together ... it was decided to retain the iron type." The transition or evolution of this room is not at all clear, and it is complicated by the addition of the care-takers apartment. It is not always possible to distinguish just what is referred to in the Minutes and letters. An estimate by H.F. Bertleman to Mrs. C. S. Holloway, May 15, 1915 includes "the kitchen addition to cost with plumbing complete \$278." There is no mention of kitchen or bath facilities during the time it was occupied as a residence. Also, the coral steps now leading to a blind wall on the ewa (left) side would have served the porch on this side. As noted above the solid clapboard wall on this side now shows traces of a former doorway at the steps as well as traces of a former window. Chronology of the above noted news accounts, however, raises several unanswered questions. Was an original lanai enclosed by Queen Emma in 1870? Was it restored to a lanai sometime before 1913? Was the lanai again enclosed around 1925, with the above noted window and door in place? During all of this time, was the roof flat? When were the above noted openings sealed and the gable roof installed? No records of these changes seem to exist.

Chimneys: None.

Openings:

All openings of the main house except in the rear are identical. Hinged in-swinging French doors are used in lieu of windows, and also for the main entrance door on the axis. Each door consists of 8 lights, 9 3/4" x 14 1/2", over a wood panel. The main entrance is emphasized with five side lights, 12" x 12" over a wood panel and a glazed transom consisting of 8 - 11" x 15" lights. There are fluted pilasters between the side lights and the doors. The doorways and window openings are framed by a

distinctive moulded trim. These openings all have operating lowered shutters full length.

In the large single room on the rear (mauka) called the Duke of Edinburgh room, the single exterior door is a modern wood paneled door containing 8 - 9" x 15" patterned glass lights in the upper panel. Windows in this room are 6/6 double-hung with sash weights. The lights are 15" x 22".

Roof - shape and covering:

There is a hipped roof over the main house and porch, while a separate gabled roof covers the Duke of Edinburgh room. Both are now covered with asbestos shingles. Over the main house the shingles are laid over an earlier roof of asphalt shingles, first covered with plywood. There is no evidence of the original roofing material, which may have been sheet metal similar to the flat roof mentioned above. The photograph in the magazine Paradise of the Pacific, December 1913, shows the hipped roof was corrugated galvanized iron.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR

Floor plan:

The basic rectangle of the plan is symmetrical. The 14' - 0" wide axial entrance hall terminates in a small room of approximately the same width (14' - 2½"), which in turn leads to the Duke of Edinburgh room. The hall is flanked on each side by two rooms, the front rooms being larger. There is a slight variation in the dimensions between the rooms on the left and those on the right.

The basement consists of a single space, excluding the areas under the front and rear porches.

Stairways:

A modern concrete stair leads from the exterior to the basement.

Flooring:

The flooring of the main house is 12" boards painted black. It is said that the flooring in the hall is original. The Duke of Edinburgh room is covered wall-to-wall with red carpet. The cement floor in the basement seems to date from 1959 (Minutes, June 12, 1959).

Walls and ceiling finish:

All interior walls are smooth plaster. All ceilings, including front lanai (porch), are single thickness 1" boards applied directly to the ceiling joists. 2 3/4" x 1/4" pattens are arranged to cover the joints and form a shallow coffered effect. Ceilings are painted white. In the Organization's Minutes, July 1925, we are told, however, that "portions of the plastering of the ceiling of the old part of the building have fallen".

Doorways and doors:

All interior doors are also double doors consisting of two vertical panels over a square panel. At each opening is a wood threshold. All doors and windows are framed on the interior with identical 5" moulded trim, except in the Duke of Edinburgh room where the trim at all openings is flat and unmoulded, except for the cased opening to the main house, noted above.

Decorative features and trim:

There are a flat unmoulded 7" base, a 1 1/2" picture mould and 2 1/4" ceiling cornice, in each room of the main house.

Notable hardware: None.

Lighting:

Modern electric crystal chandeliers in each room.

Heating: None.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Orientation: The Summer Palace is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Iolani Palace which is downtown. It is now incorporated in the southwest corner of Nuuanu Valley Park, a municipal park and playground. The entrance to the building faces the southwest, with the sunken garden, formerly a green house, on the southeast. Beyond on the southeast is the wooded slope of a low mountain peak. The asphalt driveway rises from the Pali Highway, through lush tropical growth, to a parking area before the house. Green lawns and a variety of flowering plants surround the immediate house and spread out to the landscaped park to the northeast. There are no man-made enclosures. A separate modern rock and wood building forms an enclosure, however, along the left and rear sides.

Prepared by:

Woodrow W. Wilkins

Woodrow W. Wilkins
Supervisory Architect
HABS Hawaii II Project

Date of Visit:

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